People Of God, Called Chosen Faithful - J. Leland Earls

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Biblical Study of the Church, the People of God. Goes into the Old Testament and New Testament metaphors for God's People.

Second half of book is "Called, Chosen, and Faithful" and study of the progressive growth of Christians.

"*People of God" and "Called, Chosen, and Faithful*"

- Leland Earls
- Edited by Jon R. Welker

Rev. 17:14

The People of God
God's Chosen People

Concerning the nation of Israel, God said, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise." (Isaiah 43:21). When God visited them in Egypt, He said: "And I will take you to Me for a people; and I will be to you a God…" (Exodus 6:7). How wonderful, to be chosen of God for His very own people.

Cut Off

Natural Israel failed to obey God, however. And, except for an "elect remnant" which accepted Jesus as their Messiah, they had to be "cut off" from the covenant promises. (Romans 11:5,20). But this did not frustrate God's purpose to have a people to show forth His praise. Through Christ, God made a new covenant which provided for the "grafting in" of the Gentiles as a part of His covenant people (Romans 11:17). This new covenant is based not upon works (or man's ability), as was the covenant to Israel through Moses, but upon *faith* in God's ability, made available through the grace of [God through] Christ.

The New Covenant

The New Covenant based upon better promises is the subject of the Book of Hebrews, and the writer quotes God's Word through Jeremiah concerning it:

"… Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah… I will put My laws into their mind and will write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." (Hebrews 8:8,10).

Since this Covenant is based upon "faith" rather than "race", all who believe in Christ are a part of the "house of Israel" – the seed of Abraham by faith. (Gal. 3:29), and thus *the covenant people of God.*

A People for His Name

God is now building His purpose to "… visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14). Thus, Peter says of the Gentiles:

"Which in time past were not a people but are *now* the people of God which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1Peter 2:10)

It is the people of *faith* in Christ (both Jews and Gentiles) which are now "… a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, *a people for God's own possession…"* (1Peter 2:9 NAS). And the purpose is that we should "show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Symbolic Pictures

In order to help us to understand just what it means to be the *people of God,* there are many

metaphors (comparisons) or symbolic representations given to us in the Scriptures. Each is designed to give us a particular insight into the nature and character of God and His relationship to us, and our relationship to Him as His people. Each opens up to us, from different perspectives, the manner of God's dealings with us, the goals He has for us, the lessons He wants us to learn, the qualities He wants to develop within us, and the things He has prepared for us in this present world and that which is to come. *(1 Cor. 2:9-10)*. The following are listed for consideration, and each will be developed into a separate study. The people of God are referred to as:

1. The Church of God, from the Greek word, *ekklesia*, which means the 'called out ones.' Israel was referred to as *"the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38)* because they were called out of Egypt and unto the Promised Land. So are we *called* out of the darkness of this world *(I Peter 2:9)* unto the light and glory of His Kingdom *(I Thess. 2:12, II Thess. 2:14).* In our "journey" toward that heavenly Promised Land, there are many "callings" which we must experience and enter into as a part of our preparation. These shall be considered later *(I Cor. 1:2,9).*

2. The Building (house) or "Temple" of God *(I Cor. 3:9),* as a habitation or dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph 2:21-22). Christ is the foundation (I Cor. 3:11) and chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), and we are the "living stones" of that temple (1 Peter 2:5). The stones of this temple are being cut, shaped, and built upon the foundation, and being "fitly framed together, "that in time this temple might be filled with the fullness of the glory of God (Eph. 3:19).

3. The Family of God. Because we are born of Him (Jn. 1:12-13, 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23). Christ is our elder brother (Heb. 2:11), the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29), the pattern Son (1 Peter 2:21) and our kinsman redeemer; Who has paid the price to restore our lost inheritance (1 Peter 1:18-20) that we might be joint heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17) in His glory (Heb. 2:10). We are *"waiting"* for our *"adoption"* (placing as mature sons)" (Rom. 8:23) and must continue to *"grow up"* in all things (Eph. 4:13-15), going on *"unto perfection"* (maturity) (Heb. 6:1).

4. The Bride of Christ. The New Covenant is likened unto a marriage contract, whereby those who are united unto the Lord are *one* in Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), espoused or betrothed to *one* husband and are to remain faithful to Him as "chaste virgins." (2 Cor. 11:2). The Bride is now being "made ready" (Matt. 25:10, Rev. 19:7-10), during the absence of the Bridegroom (Lk. 5:34-35), so that she is now legally joined to Him through the vows of espousal, may be personally joined to Him when He comes to take her to Himself as the returning Bridegroom (Matt. 25:6, Eph. 5:25-32).

5. The Body of Christ. "a body hast Thou prepared Me" (Heb. 10:5). As the physical body of Christ was His vehicle or instrument to use in His ministry of fulfilled the Law and bringing in the New Covenant, so is the church His spiritual body: the instrument of His purpose during this age to preach the Gospel (good news) of redemption, and to manifest His grace and glory to the world. Christ is the *head* from which all direction comes, and we are the members, each with our own function and ministry in relation to Him, the other members, and the world. (Eph. 1:22-23, 1 Cor. 12:1-31).

6. The Kingdom of God. Because we are "born of God" (Jn.1:12-13, 3:3), He has "…delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us (put us over) into the kingdom of His dear Son." (Col. 1:13). We are no more "strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints" (Eph. 2:19). Christ is now the King-priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:1-2,21), to return to the earth as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 17:14, 19:16), and we are being prepared as "overcomers" to be the co-rulers with Him in His kingdom (Rom. 3:21, 1:6, 5:10, 20:4, 6).

7. The Flock of God. We are the sheep who had gone astray through sin but are "…now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop (overseer) of your (our) souls" (1 Peter 2:25). Christ is the "good shepherd" Who laid down His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11), the "great shepherd" through His resurrection and exaltation (Heb. 11:20), and the "chief shepherd" Who appoints under-shepherds to feed His flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). As His sheep we are to follow Him and hear only His voice. (Jn. 10:27).

8. The Husbandry (Farm) of God. Christ is the Sower Who sows the seed of the Word to our hearts (Matt. 13:18-23), depending on our growth and response to the Lord in the "field" of

this world (Matt. 13:38). Christ is also the true Vine planted by the Father and we are the branches, learning to abide in Him, and letting His word abide in us, that we might bring forth the much fruit He desires (John 15:1-8).

9. The Disciples of Christ. The word "disciple" is from the Greek word *mathetes* meaning "a taught or trained one". The word is used in the Gospels to denote the close followers of Jesus who were being taught and disciplined by Him. In relation to such disciples, Jesus was the Master or Teacher, from the Greek word *didaskalos.* It refers to the one who has the authority over another to teach and discipline him in the ways of truth and righteousness. The requirements of discipleship are high, as given by Jesus in Luke 14:26-33, Matthew 10:37-39, but the rewards shall be great (Matt. 19:27-29).

10. The Servants (Slaves) of Christ. Christ is pictured in the New Testament as the lord or master who has purchased us and therefore we belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The followers of Jesus called Him "teacher and *Lord,"* and Jesus said, "ye say well, for so *I am."* (Jn. 13:13). As His servants (slaves), we own nothing of ourselves, but are stewards over all things committed to us by Him, both material and spiritual, and it is required of us that we be found faithful (Lk. 16:10-13, 1 Cor. 4:1-2). As in the type (Deut. 15:16-17), we are the Lord's voluntary love-slaves.

11. The Priests of God. As our High Priest, Christ ever lives to make intercession for us at the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 4:14-16, 7:25-26, 8:1). In the Old Testament, the ministering priests were those born into the family of Aaron the High Priest who is a type of Christ. We who are "born of Christ" are now "…an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). We are to present our bodies a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1) and offer the sacrifice of praise continually (Heb. 13:15), as a "sweet savor" unto God (2 Cor. 2:15).

12. The Army of God. Christ is our "captain" or chief leader (Heb. 2:10). We have been enlisted as "good soldiers" of Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:3-4), that we might "war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18) and "withstand in the evil day" with the armor provided for us by the Lord (Eph. 6:13-18). Our warfare is not against "flesh and blood," but against "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). Our weapons are not of the flesh, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

13. The Vessels of God. Christ is the treasure in these "earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). As the potter molds a vessel according to his purpose and choosing, so are we being molded as clay in God's Hand (Rom. 9:20-21). We are "vessels of mercy" (Rom. 9:23) being prepared unto glory, but only those who allow the Lord to do His preparing (molding) work within will be "vessels of honor" (2 Tim. 2:20-21); others in the same "house" will be "vessels to dishonor".

14. The Athletes of God. We are to fight a good fight (as a boxer) and finish our course (as a runner), that we might receive the "crown" (prize) of victory, as those who have overcome (2Tim. 2:5, 4:7-8, 1Cor. 9:24-27). Jesus was the forerunner (Heb. 6:20), the first overcomer (Jn. 16:33) to gain the victory and be crowned (Rev. 14:14). There are special promises to the overcomers in Revelation 2:7,11,17,26, 3:5,12,21, 21:7, and there are "crowns" for those who "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling" (Phil. 3:14). (See James 1:12, 1Peter 5:4, Rev. 2:10.)

15. The Laborers of God. We are "laborers together with God" (1Cor. 3:9). We are sent forth to labor in the vineyard or farm of God, even as was Christ: "as My Father sent Me, even to send I you" (Jn. 20:21). Everyone who labors receives wages (Jn. 4:36). Others have labored, and we enter into their labors (Jn. 4:38). Some sow, some water, and some reap (Jn. 4:37, 1Cor. 3:6-8). Rewards are for work well done (1Cor. 9:17; 1Tim. 5:18; 2Jn. 8; Rev. 11:18, 22:12).

16. The Redeemed of God. The people of God are a "redeemed" people. The word "redeem" mans to 'purchase' and loose) by the payment of a price. Redemption implies antecedent bondage from which there is need of deliverance. Since God redeemed Israel from Egypt, they were His people, and owed service to Him as a nation (Ex. 6:6-7). The Hebrew word for "redeemer" is *goel*, meaning 'the nearest kinsman'. The chief function of the redeemer was to "redeem" (buy back) the land that had been sold by a brother in distress, and restore his inheritance to him (Lev. 25:23-

25); or if a brother sold himself into bondage because of debt, the near kinsman could redeem and set him free (Lev. 25:47-49). When Israel went into captivity to Assyria and Babylon, lost their land and were in bondage, they needed a redeemer and looked to Jehovah to become their *goel*, Who set them free and restored them to their land (Jer. 50:33-34, Isa. 51:9-11). The near kinsman was also to avenge the blood of a slain relative (see Num. 35:10-34). Under the New Covenant, Christ is our Kinsman Redeemer (Heb. 2:14-18), giving Himself as a ransom (Titus 2:14, 1Peter 1:18) to deliver us from sin and all its consequences. He has purchased us, and we are His (1Cor. 6:19-20). He is also the avenger, meting out Divine retribution on our behalf (Rom. 12:19).

17. Builders with God. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Psalm 127:1." There are two builders in this passage: "the Lord" and "they" that labour with Him. The Lord is a *builder* ("He that built all things is God" – Heb. 3:4); but we are also helping to build that which will determine our future life quality and destiny. We begin by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the one and only foundation (1Cor. 3:11), and then we begin to build on that foundation, "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble" (1 Cor. 3:12) representing the spiritual works and disciplines that build character qualities which will endure, or fleshly works which foster human and carnal traits which cannot be allowed to continue. All work will be tested and exposed by the "fire" of God's Spirit and dealings. Great reward will come to one whose work abides, but great loss to one whose works are burned, even though he himself shall be saved "as by fire" (1Cor. 3:13-15).

18. Pilgrims of God. When Abraham was called out of the land of Chaldea, he was led by God to sojourn in a strange land that was not his, but was promised to his posterity (Gen. 12:1-3, 15:18). Thus, he became a pilgrim, with no permanent dwelling place. He dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise (Heb. 11:9). Even so, we, as the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:7,29)), are also dwelling in temporary "tents" (our physical bodies), having no permanent dwelling place here in this world. Like Abraham we look for a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10), also confessing that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13), waiting for the fulfillment of the promised inheritance.

19. 19 Stars of God. Abraham's seed, or descendants, were to be as the sand of the sea and the stars of the heaven (Gen. 15:5, 22:17). The "sand" refers to his natural seed and the "stars" to his spiritual seed, through faith (Gal. 3:7,29). Jesus is referred to as a "star" (Num. 24:17, Rev. 2:28, 22:16). Stars are heavenly bodies and are thus especially symbolic of those who are to reign with Christ in the heavenlies in glorified bodies like unto His (Phil. 3:21). Paul's teaching on the resurrection indicates different kinds of bodies for those to be resurrected: some having celestial (spiritual) bodies, and others terrestrial (earthly) bodies (1 Cor. 15:38-40). Even among the stars, he says, "one star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:41), indicating not all who are translated to the Heavenly Kingdom will have the same degree of glory. Then we read in Daniel 12:2 of those who will rule with Christ in His heavenly kingdom: "And they that be wise shall shine in the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the *stars* for ever and ever."

20. The Inheritance of God. Israel, as the people of God, were called "God's inheritance" (Ps. 74:2, Isa. 63:17). Even so, the church, which is the "new Israel," is Christ's inheritance. Jesus spoke in His final prayer to the Father of "the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world" (Jn. 17:6), and further said, "I pray for them which Thou has given Me" (Jn. 17:9). Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians as recorded in Ephesians 1:18, that their understanding might be enlightened to know "what [is] the riches of the glory of *His* (Christ's) inheritance *in* the saints." Just as we have a promised inheritance *in Christ,* so *He* has a promised inheritance *in us*, even as Jesus said: "ye in Me, and I in you" (Jn. 14:20). Should we not then let Him fully possess His inheritance? Only as we let Him possess His inheritance in us will we also fully possess our inheritance in Him. We need to see this *double* application to the inheritance truth, as Paul says in 1Corinthians 3:21-23): "All things are yours" (our inheritance), but then he adds, "and *ye* are Christ's" (His inheritance in us.)

Rich

How rich is our position as the people of God, and how great the riches that are destined

for us now and in the future if we will seek to comprehend and move into all that God has for us as His people.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2Corinthians 8:9.

Called, Chosen & Faithful

"These (the ten kings) will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them; for He is the Lord of lords and King of kings and those who are with Him are *called, chosen, and faithful."* Revelation 17:14 (NKJ)

Here I will deal primarily with the concept of *faithfulness* which according to the above Scripture, and a number of others I will share, is an absolute essential for those who will be *with* the Lord Jesus in His Heavenly Kingdom as co-heirs and co-rulers.

The truths that I will present are simple and plain, but not according to traditional concepts. As you read, I hope you will accept the challenge to re-think what you may have been taught. Are we not to study (diligently) that we might "rightly divide" the WORD of truth (2Tim. 2:15), and thus be skilled to discern which Scriptures apply to whom and the qualifying conditions and/or requirements obtaining when specific promises are made?

This I will seek to do as I deal with each of the three words in Revelation 17:14 which characterize those who will be with Jesus in His coming kingdom: (1) Called, (2) Chosen, and (3) Faithful. However, I first want to briefly define and deal with the concept of faithfulness as one of the chief characteristics of God in His relationship to man.

The Greek word for this "faithful" in the New Testament is *pistos*, which means "truthful", "trustworthy", "sure"; indicating someone who can be relied upon. As used of God in the Scriptures, faithfulness is a covenant word. When God made a Covenant with Abraham, He "swore by Himself" concerning the faithfulness of His promises (Heb. 6:13-18). Thus, it can be declared that "He Who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23). Throughout the Old Testament we read of many saints who, as members of God's covenant people, "judged Him faithful Who had promised" (Heb. 11:11).

Likewise, in the New Testament, we are repeatedly reminded of God's faithfulness. Jesus Christ is the "faithful witness" (Rev. 1:5). His words are "true and faithful" (Rev. 21:5). At present He is "a merciful and faithful High Priest" (Heb. 2:17). At His return to earth, He is declared to be "faithful and true" (Rev. 19:11).

The apostle Paul also reminds his readers that God is faithful to His commitments, as we read in 1Corinthians 1:9: "God is faithful by Whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

Paul further encourages each of us with the truth of God's unfailing love in times of trial and temptation, "God is faithful Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able…." 1Corinthians 10:13 (NAS)

"But the Lord is faithful Who will establish you and guard you from the evil one." 2Thessalonians 3:3 (NKJ)

There are many different contexts in which the Lord's faithfulness is manifested to us. The apostle Peter assures us of such faithfulness during times of suffering.

"Therefore, let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator." 1Peter 4:19 (NKJ)

Even in times of failure, we are reminded by the apostle John that God responds to our need in covenant faithfulness.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1John 1:9

So much more could be written, but I will just add the words of Jesus Himself as related in Hebrews 13:5: "… I will never leave you nor forsake you." Amen! Thank you, Jesus for Your faithfulness.

In light of these truths, should we be surprised that God requires a sufficiently measured testing in faithfulness for entrance into His Heavenly Kingdom and glory? Is God so stupid as to commit ruling positions in His coming kingdom government to untested novices who have not been proven trustworthy and faithful? Hear Jesus' own words which He will speak to those He will welcome into His own kingdom realm.

"…*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord*." – (***Matthew 25:21*** NKJ)

"…*Well done, good servant, because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities*." – ***Luke 19:17***

I will comment on the above Scriptures later. But we need to ask ourselves in all sincerity: was Jesus fully honest? Does He not say what He means and mean what He says? Or do we always have to "interpret" His statements in light of what has been traditionally taught? Why didn't Jesus say, "Welcome all you who have accepted me and are saved. Enter into the joy of your Savior"? For the simple reason that had He spoken such words, He would have been guilty of giving His hearers a false assurance and hope. Exactly as most preachers do today! Generally speaking, they teach that all who "believe in Christ as Savior" are then and there rapture bound and ready for all the glories of the Heavenly Kingdom. What deception! But let us look into the Scriptures and seek to clarify our thinking as to just *who* will be *with* Jesus in His Kingdom glory, even the *"called, chosen, and faithful"* (***Rev. 17:14*** NKJ).

Called

The Greek word translated "called" in our English Bible is *kletos*. The verb form is *kaleo*, which means to "bid", "call forth", "invite" or "summons". Those who respond to the invitations become "the called," then enter into a lifetime "calling" or "vocation," as expressed a number of times in the New Testament by the Greek word *klesis.* In order to better understand this "calling," I will briefly comment on its three phases: (1) Called *to*, (2) called *out of*, and (3) called *into*.

The initial call is *to* Jesus Himself Who said, "come unto *Me* all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (***Matthew 11:28 NKJ***)

"…I am the bread of life, He who comes to *Me* shall never hunger, and he who believes in *Me* shall never thirst. All that the Father gives *Me* will come *to Me,* and the one who comes *to* Me I will by no means cast out. And this is the will of Him who sent *Me,* that everyone who sees the Son and believes in *Him* may have everlasting life…" (John 6:35,37,40)

Many other Scriptures could be given, but clearly, the initial call *to* Jesus is for the gift of everlasting life, entering into the "rest" of secured salvation, with the burden of sin and guilt removed through His forgiveness. Peter on the day of Pentecost, spoke of this gift, declaring that "For the promise is to you and to you children and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will *call."* (Acts 2:39)

The Old Testament pattern for this phase of God's call is found in Exodus 19:4, where God speaks from Mt. Sinai. "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I have you on eagles' wings and brought you *to* Myself."

There God revealed Himself to the people, and entered into a special covenant relationship with them, that they might become a "special treasure" to Him (Ex. 19:5). They remained at the Mount for almost a year, while God taught them His ways, instructed them in the building of a Tabernacle for His Presence, that He might dwell in their midst (Ex. 25:8). All of the accompanying rites, sacrifices, priesthood, etc. were designed to teach by *type how* to come *to* God, and then how to *live daily* in a *personal* covenant relationship with Him. Thus, it must be understood that the "core" of our *calling* is our personal fellowship with our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

The second phase or aspect of our calling is expressed in the new Testament by the Greek word *ekklesia,* which is a combination of a preposition, *ek*, which means "out of" or "out from", and a derivation of *kaleo* ("to call"), meaning the "*out-called"* ones. The word is usually translated in our English versions as "church or "assembly." But the emphasis in the Greek is that those called

together *to* Jesus have also been called *out* of the world (*kosmos* – the Godless society as ruled over by Satan).

God's picture language in living drama for this in the Old Testament is the Israelites being *called out* of Egypt. In Acts 7:38, Israel is referred to as "the church (*ekklesia*) in the wilderness." In Egypt they were in bondage to Pharaoh, who is a type of Satan. To get them *out* from under that bondage, and *away* from the pervasive influence of the idolatrous, immoral Egyptian society, it was necessary for them to become a separated people. It is difficult to learn new ways, new worship and a whole new life style while still being strongly influenced by the negative defilements of Satan's world system. Therefore, the necessity to be *out-called* and separate, as the Lord declared in Leviticus 20:24: "I am the Lord your God Who has separated you from the peoples (of Egypt)." (NKJ)

Jesus affirmed this perspective as He taught His disciples: "…I chose you *out* of the world, therefore the world hates you (Jn. 15:19), and as He prayed to the Father, for His disciples, "I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them because they are not *of* the world, just as I am not of the world." (John 17:14 NKJ)

Repeatedly, throughout both the Old and New Testaments, God's people are reminded that they are called to be "holy," which means "*separated".* Peter reminds his readers of this in 1Peter 1:15-16, "As He Who called you is holy, you also be holy in all our conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy" (NKJ). (See Lev. 11:44-45, 19:2, 20:7). Paul enjoins the same in 2Corinthians 6:14-18, which you should read carefully. Thus the "wilderness" is the *arena* where God's "out-called" people are taught, tested, cleansed (made holy) and prepared for a greater destiny, as we shall see.

For God did not bring the Israelites *out* of Egypt that they might remain *in* the wilderness. He brought *out* that He might bring them *into* the land which He had sworn to their fathers (Ex. 5:8, Deut. 6:23). That Canaan land becomes a type of the coming Kingdom inheritance prepared for God for those who love Him (see Matt. 25:34, 1Cor. 2:9), for as yet the church (the "out-called") is still in the wilderness of testing and proving. Multitudes of Israelites who came out of Egypt and became God's "covenant people" at Mount Sinai, did *not* enter the Promised Land. Of those who came *out*, only two (Joshua and Caleb) of that generation were permitted to cross Jordan on dry land and inherit the promised Canaan *west* of the river.

There is more than one aspect of truth portrayed in this Divinely ordained drama, but from one perspective, Joshua is a *type* of Jesus Who is our forerunner, entering first into the *glory*-realm beyond the *veil* (Heb. 6:19-20), which corresponds to the river *Jordan* in the earthly type. In the *Hebrew* language, Jesus' name was *Joshua,* meaning "Jehovah is savior". "Caleb" in the Hebrew means "a dog". It is only the faithful followers of Jesus (Rev. 14) who will "cross over" to inherit the heavenly Canaan land.

It was at the *end* of the forty years of testing and proving (symbolic of the *end* of the present "church age") that the "crossing over" took place. We are now *near* to that time when *first* a firstfruits company of close followers of Jesus will "cross over" from the earthly to the heavenly realm. Three and one half years later a great "harvest company" of "close followers," who "come out of great tribulation" (Rev. 7:8-14) will "cross over" having their bodies changed to the *glorified* estate.

In order to fully understand the living drama wrought out by Israel, we must distinguish between the east and west sides of Jordan. The territory on the east side was *not* a part of the promised inheritance given to Abraham and his seed. At the time of the conquest, the territory on the east side was ruled by two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og. When approaching the land Sihon, messengers were sent out from Israel saying, "Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory." (Numbers 21:22 NKJ).

Without going into great detail, it becomes apparent that later the leaders of certain tribes (Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh) requested of Moses that they be permitted to have their inheritance in this conquered territory east of Jordan. This request was granted, providing

they fulfilled certain conditions. You can read the details in Numbers 32:1-33. My point is that there is symbolism here for us. Read 1Corinthians 10:1-11, the words "examples" and "ensamples" are used in the English, but the Greek word is *tupos*, which means a "die" (as struck), and thus by implication a stamp or mold; a type, figure, form or pattern (of things to come).

Multitudes of Christians who think that they are slated for the "cross over" into the heavenly "Canaan-land" to rule with Jesus are going to find themselves in the coming Kingdom on the "east side of Jordan" having missed the *call* (and requirements) to come *into* the co-regency of Jesus Christ in His Glory-realm, symbolized by the *west* side of Jordan. The "east side" portrays the earthly kingdom realm. Where all of the "saved" will have their lot (both Old Testament saints and New Testament Christianity), living in immortal physical bodies. Only the "called, chosen, and faithful" will ascend up higher, functioning in glorified bodies.

Please take note that the reason given by certain tribal leaders wanting to stay on the east side is the fact that they had "a very great multitude of livestock," and "the country is a land for livestock," and "your servants have livestock" (Num. 32:1-5 NKJ). In those days, livestock meant wealth. They were more interested in their material possessions than hearing God's call to "cross over" into Canaan-land, saying "do not take us over the Jordan." The type for us, I believe, is very clear, and corresponds to the truth of the parable given by Jesus as recorded in Luke 14:16-24 concerning a certain man who gave a great supper and invited many. When all things were ready, he sent his servant to those invited saying, "Come, for all things are now ready. But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, I have bought a piece of ground and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to text them. I ask you to have me excused. Still another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." (NKJ).

Sound similar to those tribal leaders who came to Joshua and said, "We have a great multitude of livestock, therefore do not take us over the Jordan"?

The parable in Luke 14 simply says that "A certain *man* gave a great supper" (14:16 NKJ), but in a similar parable in Matthew 22:1-14 we read of a "certain *king* who arranged a *marriage* for his son" (22:2 NKJ).

For even better understanding, I will approach this analogy from another perspective. After the east side of Jordan had been conquered. Moses addressed the people with these words.

"As yet you have not come to the REST and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and when He gives you rest from all your enemies .... " ***Deuteronomy 12:9-10*** *(NKJ)*

Notice that the *west* side is referred to as the REST and inheritance from the Lord.

I believe we can relate this Old Testament "rest," symbolically, with the "rest" God has prepared for New Testament saints as discussed by Paul in *Hebrews* 3 and 4. One is a type of the other; the earthly is a type of the heavenly. In ***Hebrews 4:9-10****,* after alluding to the Old Testament "rest" of Canaan-land, and the *example* of the multitudes who came out of Egypt and *Jailed* to enter into that Promised Land rest, he declares,

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

For he who has entered His (God's) *rest has himself also ceased from his work as God did from His." (NKJ)*

The Amplified Version gives, I believe, the true essence of *verse* 9 by rendering it as follows:

"So then there is still a full and complete Sabbath rest for the people of God. "

We need to understand that there are different *kinds* and *degrees* of rest. The Christian life begins with a response to Jesus' invitation,

"Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." ***Matthew 11:28***

This is the "rest" from the burden and grief of sin and all its consequences, through the forgiveness of Christ and His gift of eternal life. This initial "rest" is echoed in the words found in ***Hebrews 4:3****,*

"For we who have believed do enter into that rest .... " (NKJ)

However wonderful the "rest" of secured salvation is, that is only the beginning of our "believing" response to all that God has promised and challenged us with in the Scriptures. There are ever deepening levels of inner soul rest as we are disciplined by Him. Jesus promised this in **Matthew 11:29**,

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me ... and you will find rest for your souls. "

But what about that *"full* and *complete* rest" promised in *Hebrews* 4:9? As long as one is confined to a physical body, I think it is quite obvious there can be no *complete* rest. As this present age ends, however, and the millennial reign begins, the "good news" of immortality in human flesh will be widely heralded, and some will have their bodies changed from mortal to immortal. Also, those resurrected back to this earth will manifest such immortality. But regardless of how wonderful it would be to live in perpetual youth and health, the continued confinement to earthly conditions and limitations would *preclude* such ones from experiencing a *full* and *complete* rest.

The "rest" of *Hebrews* 3 and 4 can only be understood in terms of the "heavenly Canaan-land," symbolized by the west side of Jordan. It is the "rest" of full and complete redemption, whereby the physical body is changed to a glorified body like unto Jesus' glorified body *(Phil. 3:20-21).* This "rest" is only for those who respond to the CALL to enter into this promised inheritance by a life of diligent devotion and faithfulness to Christ. That's why the writer of the *Hebrew* epistle admonishes:

"Let us therefore be zealous and exert ourselves and strive diligently to enter that rest (of God's) to know and experience it for ourselves that no one may fall or perish by the same kind of unbelief and disobedience (unto which

those in the wilderness fell)." (Amplified Version)

Notice that in the above Scripture, the writer is addressing Christians (already "saved") warning and exhorting them that there is something they can fall short of. That is the basic message of the entire Book of Hebrews: that "the called" may fail to go on and diligently aspire to become a part of the "elect" those chosen for the presence of Christ, to share in His rule over the earth. It is God Who "calls you INTO His own Kingdom and GLORY" (1 Thess. 2:12 NKJ). But you must be "diligent to make your call and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10 NKJ).

CHOSEN

"*Many are called (invited and summoned), but few are chosen*." ***Matthew 22:14*** (Amplified Version)

In light of what I have already written, it should be apparent that "the called" are not necessarily "the chosen." I will deal with Matthew 22:14 in its context, but first we need to take a look at the word translated "chosen." The Greek word is e*klektos*, which means 'select'; by implication, 'favorite', 'chosen', 'elect'. It is used 23 times in the New Testament and is translated "chosen" seven times and "elect" sixteen times. Derived from that Greek word is the Greek word: e*klogee*, which is used in the New Testament once as "chosen" and sixteen times as "election." The verb form is *eklegomai*, and is translated variously as "chosen," choose," "make choice" and "has chosen."

Does God have "favorites" whom He selects or chooses for certain purposes over others whom He does not select for these purposes? Yes, the Scriptures are full of such selections. However, such choices by God have nothing to do with "respect of persons" (Rom. 2:11, Eph. 6:9, Col. 3:25), but rather fitness for the job or assignment.

God chose Abraham over all others to be the progenitor of a chosen nation. To continue that chosen line, He selected Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, etc. He chose David over all of his brothers to be king over Israel, and the progenitor of a succession of kings, leading to King Jesus. Jesus Himself made a selection of twelve men for a very special purpose.

" ... *He called His disciples to Himself and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles." Luke* 6:13 *(NKJ)*

To them Jesus said, *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you .... " John* 15:16 *(NKJ)*

Chosen for what? First to be apostles, that is, those sent out by Him with a special message of commission. But as to their roles in the age to come, He declared to them:

" ... *you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. " Matthew* 19:28 *(NKJ)*

"Election" has nothing to do with salvation. In other words, God does not arbitrarily choose or select some to be saved and others not to be saved, as was taught by some reformers, especially John Calvin. Rather, as He works out His redemptive plan on this earth, as a Master strategist, God foresees, plans and prepares various human vessels who He then selects and places in certain "roles" or functions for which they are best fitted according to His purposes. The Scriptures certainly support this perspective, as pointed out by the apostle Paul in *Romans 9:10-13:*

"And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him Who calls), it was said to her, the older shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved (chosen), *but Esau I have hated* (rejected, as not *fit* for the purpose of perpetuating Abraham's seed)" *(NKJ).*

It should become apparent to any thinking person that such "election" presupposes God's *foreknowledge.* God could not choose responsibly if He did not know beforehand what individuals would do under certain circumstances and testings, and what they would *ultimately become.* God foreknew that Esau would become a fornicator, a profane person, and would despise his birthright to the point of selling it to satisfy his physical appetite *(Heb.* 12:16). He also foreknew that Jacob, although a trickster and deceiver, would "prize" the birthright, and eventually, through many testings and provings, would also garner the qualities necessary to be submissive to His will and fulfill His purpose. At a critical time in his life Jacob "wrestled" with God and called it the "face of God." There he received the Divine blessing and a new name (Israel: 'prince with God'). (See *Gen. 32:24-31,* 35:9-15.)

Here again, we have to understand that these "living dramas" through Abraham and his seed happened to them as patterns (of truth) for us. Jacob-Israel, *after* Peniel, having the birthright inheritance and a changed name (nature), is a *type* of the "elect" of this present age who will enter the Heavenly Kingdom to be "princes" (rulers) with God *(Rev.* 1:5-6, *5:9-10).* Esau, on the other hand, who was also a part of the family of Isaac (a type of Jesus), is a type of the vast majority of Christians who, because of their continued carnal propensities and lack of "spiritual drive" to be overcomers, are destined to have their lot upon this earth in immortal physical bodies for a thousand years or more, eventually to be glorified. Esau did receive a blessing from his father Isaac *(Gen. 27:38-40),* but it was far less than what he could have had. Esau wept bitterly after realizing his loss *(Gen. 27:34,38).*

Because there is so much symbolism involved in the birthright, I believe a further clarification will help. The firstborn son in each family was given certain privileges and responsibilities. The firstborn received a *double* portion of the family estate; the other sons single and equal portions. The firstborn was also *head* of the whole family. As head of the family he had also, according to patriarchal custom, to provide food, clothing, and shelter, and other necessities in his house for his mother until death, and his unmarried sisters until their marriage. In the patriarchal order, the firstborn was also the priest of the family. However, after the law was given, the tribe of Levi was chosen for the priesthood instead of the firstborn *(Num.* 3:12,13).

The point I want to make is that in God's *patterns,* one son in each family (the firstborn) was "elevated" above the others in the family for certain important responsibilities and service to the other members of the family; and thus, the need for the investiture with the double-portion inheritance, the headship leadership, and the priestly instruction and guidance. This is in harmony with God's dictum that *"the elder* (more mature) *shall serve the younger* (immature). "

It is the "elect" among Christians who will *fulfill* this pattern of the birthright inheritance.

Those *chosen* for the Bride company will be the first to be "elevated" (by translation of their bodies) to this birthright inheritance. For they will truly be the *firstborn* OUT of the church body (pictured by the "man child" of *Rev.* 12 and the "firstfruits" of *Rev.* 14). But the Bride will need a great multitude *(Rev.* 7:9) of helper servants to facilitate the supervision, guidance and instruction of the inhabitants of the earth. Thus, those tested and matured during the Great Tribulation will also be elevated to the glorified estate to join the Bride, to participate with her in this birthright commission of oversight and service.

The "double portion" of the birthright inheritance will be fulfilled in the glorified saint's power to live and manifold fest in both the heavenly and earthly realms. With millions of glorified saints able to visibly appear in a flesh and bone body (as Jesus did), the promise in *Isaiah 30:20-21* will be fulfilled:

"...*„your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore. But your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, this is the way, walk in it .... "*

This is what the Lord has been working toward in all previous ages up until now: the schooling, preparing and maturing of a sufficient number of teachers, so that His Kingdom plan for this earth can move into "full gear" so that future generations born on earth can be so taught and monitored, that they will be able to speedily move into a disciplined life, immortality, maturity and ultimate glorification.

One more lesson from the pattern of the birthright inheritance needs to be emphasized. God providentially arranged that the firstborn son in each of the families of the patriarchs was set aside in favor of one more worthy. Abraham's son Isaac replaced his firstborn Ishmael, for Isaac was a product of Divine power and grace; whereas Ishmael was engendered by human effort. We have already dealt with Jacob replacing Esau. Of the sons of Jacob, Reuben was the firstborn. But Jacob's prophetic word over Reuben was:

"Reuben, you are my firstborn.... Unstable as water, you shall not excel..." (Gen. 49:3,4 *NKJ).* Therefore, the birthright was given to Joseph.

Joseph's two sons Manasseh and Ephraim were elevated to full tribal status among the other eleven sons of Jacob in order to fulfill the "double portion" of the birthright *(Gen.* 48:6,13-16). The name Manasseh means 'forgetfulness'; so named by Joseph because he said *" ... God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house" (Gen.* 41:51 *NKJ).* In *Psalm* 45:9-11 we read of a *queen* (a type of the Bride elect of Christ) being prepared for her wedding to the great King (Jesus). She is admonished to *''forget your own people also, and your father's house."* This is in harmony with Jesus' teaching that those who would follow Him would forsake all and be His disciples.

God's *choosing* one over another for the birthright inheritance in the lives of the patriarchs was meant to speak to us; to help us understand that "worthiness" or "fitness" for certain tasks or "roles" in the Kingdom of God is absolutely necessary as God works out His redemptive purpose. This is the "heart" of election. Concerning those who would be chosen for His presence, Jesus used the Greek word *axios,* which means 'deserving, comparable, or suitable; due reward, meet, fit or worthy'. The *KING JAMES VERSION* of the Bible translates this Greek word 40 times as "worthy," or in the verb form "counted worthy" or "accounted worthy"; 4 times as "meet" and once as "due reward." I personally like the English words "suitable," "comparable" or "fit," because the concept is not of some intrinsic worthiness that we have, or something we deserve in and of ourselves, because we have "chalked up" so many points with God because of all the hours we have put in serving the Lord, etc.

Rather, the *grace* and *power* of Christ has *changed* us sufficiently within so that *preoccupation* with carnal desires and drives has been severed by the fire of God's Spirit (circumcision of the heart), and so that the desire to know Jesus and follow Him takes precedence over every other interest in life. As we then grow in our walk with the Lord there increasingly develops within a comparableness, suitability, and fitness to dwell in the Lord's Presence, and to work with Him to subdue all things to Himself in the ages to come. Following are a few Scriptures where *axios* is used.

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is <u>not worthy</u> of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is <u>not worthy</u> of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is <u>not worthy</u> of Me." ***Matthew 10:37-38***

"Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were <u>not worthy</u>." **Matthew 22:8** *(N~J)*

" ... that you may be <u>counted worthy</u> of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer." 2 Thessalonians 1:5 *(NKJ)* (but read all of *vss 3-5)*

"You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they <u>are worthy</u>." Revelation 3:4 *(NKJ)*

"Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would <u>count</u> you *<u>worthy</u> of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power." 2 Thessalonians* 1:11 *(NKJ)*

"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be <u>counted worthy</u> to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36 *(N~J)*

Remember, it is *God* Who chooses. It is He Who will determine WHO fits WHERE, (depending on the tasks and responsibilities involved). But since certain requirements are set forth in the Scriptures for those who aspire to the "higher calling," then we, by our response and obedience, largely determine our own destiny. This brings us to the third of the triad found in *Revelation* 17: Faithfulness.

FAITHFOL

I have already shown that the Greek word for faithfulness is *pistos,* which means 'truthful', "trustworthy', 'sure'; indicating someone who can be relied upon. No kingdom could long stand without those in positions of authority being sufficiently matured, tested and proven so that they can be trusted with important responsibilities.

The concept of faithfulness is presented in two main contexts. The first is the marriage covenant. Fidelity to one's mate is Divinely urged upon man, and God says He hates divorce *(Mal.* 2:14-16). During this age of grace, it is God's purpose to *"visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His <u>Name</u>" (Acts* 15:14). Who takes a man's name but His *bride?* Later, those in His household. It is clear from *Revelation* 19:7-8, 21:2,9, that an elect company of Christian saints are being prepared to fulfill the role of the Bride of Christ in His coming Kingdom. The requirements for the Bride are found primarily in *Revelation* 3:7-13; 14:1-5. I will deal with those Scriptures shortly.

In Bible times, it was at what was known as the "betrothal" or "espousal" (corresponding somewhat to our "engagement") that there was a formal proceeding, undertaken by a friend or legal representative on the part of the bridegroom, and by parents on the part of the bride. It was confirmed by oath and accompanied with presents for the bride and/ or a dowry to the father for the "sale" of his daughter. From this time on the couple was considered legally husband and wife even though they usually did not live together until a year or more later.

It was in the cultural context of this Hebrew practice that Paul expresses this concern for the Corinthian believers as recorded in ***II*** *Corinthians* 11:2-3 *(NKJ):*

"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

The Greek word translated "simplicity" would be better translated "singleness," in the sense of *single-hearted devotion,* or *complete sincerity* (without duplicity). The implication of Paul's concern is that these Christians could be unfaithful to the Lord and lose their "virgin" estate (but not their "salvation"). I will not try to go into detail, but intimate concourse with the world and its ways can usurp the love and devotion which Christ alone must have *(Rev.* 2:4). This is why there are both wise and foolish virgins at the Lord's coming *(Matt. 25:2).*

Let's look at the Scriptures that I believe set forth the positive aspects or requirements for

the Bride company. In *Revelation* 14:1-5, John the apostle sees in vision a group of 144,000 standing with the Lamb on Mt. Zion, for they have been redeemed from among men, and also out from the earth (life). The latter statement would indicate the translation and glorification of their physical bodies (see *Rom.* 8:23).

How can we know that this group constitutes the "Bride of Christ"? First, we are clearly told that they are the "Firstfruits" unto God and the Lamb *(Rev.* 14:4). This indicates that they will be the first to be translated to glorified life. By *Matthew* 25:6 we understand that Jesus comes *first* as the *Bridegroom (later* as King of kings and Lord of lords *Rev.* 19:16). He first comes to receive His Bride, for she has *"made herself ready" (Rev.* 19:7). She then helps to prepare those who are to be the invited guests; those *"called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev.* 19:9, 22:17).

The second context in which faithfulness is an essential virtue is that of stewardship. In Bible times, a steward was a manager or overseer of another's household. A rich person or a government official would need someone he could trust to superintend his personal and family affairs, his properties, goods, etc. This might be a servant hired for that responsibility, who becomes an integral part of the extended family, such as Eliezer, who was over the household of Abraham *(Gen.* 15:2). In the days when it was common to own slaves, the steward could be a trusted slave who would be elevated to such a position as was Joseph, who was placed over the house of Potiphar in Egypt *(***Gen. 43:19, 44:1,4**).

We read of stewards over all the substance and possessions of king David (1 *Chron.* 28:1), and of Herod *(Lk. 8:3),* etc. As great confidence was reposed in these officials, Paul describes Christian ministers as the stewards of God over His church *(Titus* 1:7). Individual Christians are also said to be stewards of God's gifts and graces (1 *Pet. 4:10).* Paul expresses the stewardship aspect of our relationship to God in ***1 Corinthians 4:1-2****:*

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. "

A number of Jesus' parables deal directly or indirectly with stewardship responsibility as a "key" factor in His dealing with those whom He has called to be His servants, both individually and collectively. To examine this in detail is beyond the scope of this booklet, but it is clear that future destinies are determined by faithfulness in stewardship or lack thereof. A more important statement could not be made than that given by Jesus as recorded in *Luke 16:10-12.*

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" (NKJ)

The above truth-laws (unchanging principles) were enunciated by Jesus as a part of His parable regarding a certain steward *(Lk.* 16:1). Again we see that the key to stewardship is faithfulness. How we responsibly handle everything God has committed to us, including material possessions (the unrighteous mammon), has a large bearing on our destiny, placement and "true (eternal) riches" in the coming Kingdom of Christ.

This perspective is further illustrated by a parable told by Jesus as recorded in *Matthew 25:14-30.* It deals with a man (a type of Jesus) who entrusted his goods to certain of his servants while he was away on a journey to a far country. On his return he dealt with each of his servants in terms of their stewardship responsibilities while he was gone. Those to be commended were greeted with these words:

"Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few things. I *will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord."* ***Matthew* 25:21** *(NKJ)*

In the above Scripture the Greek word for "done" is *poieo,* which means to 'make' or 'do' in a wide variety of applications, such as execute, exercise, fulfill, give, perform, provide, and work. It is the same Greek word that is used in *Matthew 25:40* where King Jesus says to the sheep on His right, *"In as much as ye have done it unto the least of My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."* And what had they done? We are told in ***Matthew 25:35-36****,*

"I *was hungry and you gave Me food;* I *was thirsty and you gave Me drink;* I *was a stranger*

and you took Me in; naked and you clothed Me; I *was sick and you visited Me;* I *was in prison and you came to Me." (NKJ)*

In other words, the *"well done"* refers to faith wrought out in *actions* and deeds of *service* for *others.* If we have not learned to serve others here, how can Jesus deem us fit to be placed in positions of service for others in His coming Kingdom?

The Greek word for "good" in *Matthew* 25:21 is *agathos,* which means 'valuable' or 'virtuous' in an *intrinsic* or inward sense (fair, good, honest, worthy) in contrast to that which is merely outward or for appearance. Paul uses the word in *Philippians* 1:6 of the inner work the Lord purposes to do in each saint in preparation for the day of Christ's return.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He Mo *has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." (N~/)*

It seems evident that those who were pronounced "good" in *Matthew* 25:21 had allowed the Lord to complete that inner work, as God sees it, and are thus considered "fit" to enter the glorified domain to rule with Christ. You will also find the same Greek word used numerous times in the New Testament as an adjective, such as good works, good conscience, good report, good steward, good fruits, good fidelity, good behavior, good ministers, etc. *IJohn* makes it clear that *agathos* is the summation of Divine good or goodness as the opposite of all that is evil. From the same Greek root is another word, *agath* which is translated "goodness" in *Romans* 15:14, *Galatians* 5, *Ephesians* 5:9 as one of the *fruits* of the Spirit.

To those receiving the commendation, *"well done good and faithful servant,* "the Master extends an invitation linked with a promise: *"you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matt.* 25:21 *NKJ).* In another stewardship parable recorded in Luke's Gospel similar words are spoken to the faithful, *"Well done, good servant, because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities" (Lk.* 19:17 *NKJ).*

For those fit to enter the glorified realm to rule with Christ there will be no idle strumming of harps or perpetual vacations in the Lord's *aionion* ('all enduring') plan to subdue all things to Himself (see *Phil.* 3:21, *I* Cor. 15:24-28). Each glorified saint will have WORK to do. As a matter of fact, THAT (your work or assignment) is a part of your reward. Please note *Revelation* 22:12 where Jesus says, *"and behold I come quickly. And My reward is with Me,* to *give* to *every man according as his works shall be."* In the Greek it is present tense, and would be more accurately translated, "as his work is." But to me it is at least suggestive that our work assignment will be our reward (at least in part).

Let me illustrate. Suppose a rich father had vast business interests. He also had a large family which he was raising to become well disciplined, responsible adults. He saw that they had good schooling, and as ready, each was sent off to a good college to be prepared for whatever their work might be. The growing youth, of course, knew of their father's business enterprises, and as each entered college, they took courses that would in some way prepare themselves to fill some useful position in working together with their father.

Now let's suppose that the oldest in the family finishes college, and graduates, looking forward with great joy to the opportunities and challenges ahead as he is introduced into a post of responsibility in one of his father's businesses. But the son is in for a shock after his graduation. "Son," the father says, "I have something wonderful prepared for you." The father takes the son to a window and points to a mansion on yonder hillside and says, "I have built a beautiful place for you and your future family to live. All of your needs will be taken care of. I have placed a large picture of myself above the fireplace. There are harps and other musical instruments for you to learn to play, so that you can sing and praise me all day long for all I have provided for you."

The son turned away in stunned silence. After a few moments, he mustered the courage to speak. "But dad, I was so looking forward to the challenge of working with you in your business enterprises. Because of what I have learned, I believe I have much to contribute, and .... " The father's interruption was abrupt and firm. "No, son. I wouldn't think of making you work or assume any responsibility. Now that you have finished school and graduated, I want you to just relax and enjoy yourself for the rest of your life."

I'm sure that virtually all of you would agree that the above scenario is ridiculous and totally unrealistic. It is not the way most human fathers deal with their maturing sons. However, it does fit most of the "fairy-tale" *concepts* that are prevalent in church teachings of today. I have actually heard Christians say that heaven (as they have heard it taught) sounds rather *boring.* That's because they have not been taught God's future plan of the ages.

Are we not made in God's image *(Gen.* 1:26-27)? Does not our heavenly father desire (and purpose) to bring His maturing sons into "His business" that they might work with Him in future ages to "subdue all things unto Himself?" In a large human family, are not the older ones expected to help supervise and guide the younger ones?

This is the principle which God has declared in His word, that *"the elder shall serve the younger."* When will Christians get their "puppy eyes" opened to the fact that we are here on earth for *schooling;* to gain experience and learn important lessons; to be disciplined to maturity, so that we will be READY (for glorification) to be *used* to supervise, teach and discipline future generations of younger ones who will be born on earth in the ages to come.

The "good news" of future ages will be immortality in human flesh. God is not interested in people "dying and going to heaven." LIFE with no death is His plan for earthlings even preservation of the human body, which is His masterpiece of creation, and the perfect "vehicle" for His spirit-children to function in as they grow and advance in His plan. Death is an enemy to be destroyed *(1 Cor. 15:26).*

With millions of elect saints having glorified bodies with the ability to appear in the physical realm, the promise to earthlings found in *Isaiah 30:20-21,* will be fulfilled;

" ... your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore. But your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, this is the way walk in it. Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left. " *(NKJ)*

Just think of future generations being born, and as they grow, being so carefully taught and supervised by glorified saints. This will be in cooperation with their parents and then continuing on as they grow into manhood or womanhood so that they are kept from ever entering into volitional, willful sin.

[End]

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